



9 July 2021



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 17 June 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

Details on school lunches since the start of the year, including:

- 1. A breakdown of how many were wasted and which school they were wasted from*
- 2. Any feedback about why there were wasted*
- 3. Details of meals which were rejected as lunches, and why?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Almost 215,000 students at 963 schools across the country are now eligible to receive a healthy school lunch as part of Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme which has received overwhelming support from principals, parents and teachers since its introduction.

Waste and Surplus

As the programme is being implemented, we are gathering information through our regular monitoring of schools, kura and suppliers. To enable us to evaluate and monitor this programme, we are differentiating between food waste (partially eaten food) and surplus food (untouched lunches).

Surplus lunches

The programme is designed to provide one lunch per student per day. We understand that there may be times where there is a surplus of food as part of the programme, for example when students are absent from school. Where schools and kura have chosen to outsource to a supplier, the issue of surplus lunches can be raised with the supplier in the first instance and may be addressed by adjusting the number of orders. Suppliers also provide information about which foods should be disposed of if not eaten straight away, and which can be safely sent home with children if there are surplus lunches.

Schools order lunches based on their school roll and it is their responsibility to keep their supplier informed with the most up to date student numbers and information on any medical or religious dietary requirements.

We encourage schools to redistribute surplus lunches and have heard of a range of ways schools are passing on surplus lunches in ways that benefit the community and continue to improve food security.

Examples of schools redistributing surplus lunches include:

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- Sending them home with students
- Giving them to whānau who need support
- Using them for morning and afternoon tea and after school snacks
- Sharing with kōhanga reo
- Using local food redistribution organisations and churches who send lunches to food banks, shelters, and other community groups

Food safety is a key factor for schools deciding what to do with surplus lunches. If schools choose to redistribute any surplus lunches, guidance developed in collaboration with the Ministry for Primary Industries is provided on how to manage this safely.

Food waste

Our guidelines require schools to reduce food wastage through menu planning, stock management, and use of leftovers if it can be done safely. Schools need a plan to deal with food wastage, e.g. composting, and are encouraged to minimise packaging and reduce the use of plastic food wrap and single use cutlery and tableware. Suppliers are also asked to consider solutions to minimise waste as part of the tender process and most are now working with pig and worm farms to manage this waste.

As many whānau will know, children's tastes vary, and it can be challenging to provide healthy food they will eat. Our experience from the pilot has shown that untried lunches in the first term of implementation are a normal part of this transition, as students get used to the food and suppliers learn more about students' tastes. The Ministry provides support to schools and suppliers to manage this transition, including menu adaptation and practical approaches. More information for schools is available at [Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches Programme: resources for participating schools and kura – Education in New Zealand](#)

Questions One and Two

The Ministry does not require schools to report on food waste (partially eaten food). I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

With regard to surplus food (untouched lunches), the Ministry does not require schools and kura to count surplus lunches on a daily basis; however, the monitoring process includes questions on surplus lunches. The conversations are qualitative and any data we gather is point-in-time. At this stage, there is insufficient data to report.

Question Three

We have interpreted this question as details of meals deemed non-compliant by the programme. The Ministry of Health's *Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Schools* is used by the programme. In this guidance foods are categorised as green, amber, and red, as outlined in **Table One**.

As part of the programme, suppliers are advised that healthy options (green foods and drinks) should make up at least 75 percent of all lunches provided. Any lunches that contain red items are not compliant. Nutrition Guidelines also include detail on appropriate portion sizes for different ages and food groups. These ensure students are receiving the nutrients they need for their development.

Table One – Food categories

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Green Items | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are a good source of nutrition• are the basis of a healthy diet• are generally lower in saturated fat, salt and added sugar• are mostly whole and less processed• come from the four food groups: vegetables and fruit; grain foods (mostly wholegrain and those naturally high in fibre); milk and milk products (mostly low fat); and legumes, seafood, eggs and meat with fat removed. |
| Amber Items | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are not part of an everyday diet• may have some nutritional value• are often more processed• in large serving sizes, can contribute to consuming excess kilojoules/calories. |
| Red Items | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are not part of an everyday diet• may have some nutritional value• are often more processed• in large serving sizes, can contribute to consuming excess kilojoules/calories. |

Menus developed by schools, kura or suppliers are all approved by the Ministry of Education's Nutritionist, before they are implemented, to ensure they are meeting the programme's nutritional guidelines.

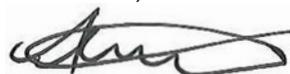
A formal nutrition monitoring process was trialled in Term 1, 2021 and has since been implemented with Ministry of Education staff contacting schools and kura to collect information about the programme at least once per term. As part of this, a meal from each school is assessed, and a nutritionist analyses the lunch focusing on adherence to the menu and portion sizes and provides feedback to suppliers.

During the nutrition monitoring trial, 80 meals were identified as being non-compliant with the programmes Nutrition Guidelines. In each instance, the nutritionist has worked with schools, kura and suppliers to refine and improve their menus to align with the Guidelines. The full list of meals that were identified as non-compliant and the reason for non-compliance is attached below as **Annex One**.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. If you have further questions please feel free to contact our media team in the first instance at media.team@education.govt.nz. If you are unsatisfied with my response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review it. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Helen Hurst

Tumu Te Hāpai ō Rāngai
Sector Enablement and Support

Annex One – Non-Compliant Meals

| Ref # | Meal name | Reason for non-compliance |
|-------|--|---|
| 1 | Filled roll/muesli bar | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 2 | Sandwich, Muffin, Apple | Not 75% green |
| 3 | Ham and Cheese Salad Roll | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 4 | Creamed corn baskets with carrot salad | Portion size |
| 5 | Butter Chicken | Not 75% green |
| 6 | Wrap | Not 75% green, contain red item |
| 7 | Chicken Nachos | Portion size |
| 8 | Bacon and Salad open taco | Not 75% green, portion size, contain red item |
| 9 | Chicken wrap | Not 75% green |
| 10 | Pasta salad | Not 75% green |
| 11 | Sausage in white bun, muffin, scone, fruit | Not 75% green, contain red item |
| 12 | Wholegrain wrap, yoghurt, fruit | Portion size |
| 13 | Chicken pasta salad | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 14 | Filled roll, cake, apple | Not 75% green, contain red item |
| 15 | Nachos | Not 75% green |
| 16 | Chicken w potato salad | Not 75% green |
| 17 | Pizza Bread | Not 75% green, portion size, contain red item |
| 18 | Quiche and salad | Portion size |
| 19 | Wholemeal roll with chicken, salad, fruit, vegetables, and chips | Not 75% green |
| 20 | Burger | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 21 | Scone, carrots, celery sticks, dip, butter, yoghurt & muesli bar | Not 75% green |
| 22 | Nachos | Not 75% green, portion size, contain red item |
| 23 | Nachos | Not 75% green |
| 24 | Nachos | Not 75% green, contain red item |
| 25 | Cheese & lettuce sandwich | No Protein |
| 26 | Chicken and Salad Roll | Contain red item |
| 27 | Ham Roll | Not 75% green |
| 28 | Chicken Wrap | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 29 | Chicken Wrap | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 30 | Vegetarian Wrap | Not 75% green |
| 31 | Ham sandwich with carrots, hummus and fruit | Portion size |
| 32 | Wholemeal Roll, fruit salad and pretzels | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 33 | Chicken sandwich with anzac biscuits and fruit | Not 75% green, contain red item |
| 34 | Ham sandwich with cracker sticks and fruit | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 35 | Chicken Drumsticks and Salad | Not 75% green |
| 36 | Wrap | Not 75% green |
| 37 | Bun, veg, carrot cake, etc | Not 75% green |
| 38 | Stew/Mash | Not 75% green |
| 39 | chicken and coleslaw | Not 75% green |
| 40 | Chicken Teriyaki Rice Salad, with an orange and anzac biscuit | Not 75% green |
| 41 | Chicken and salad | Not 75% green |
| 42 | Meatball Wrap | Portion size, contain red item |
| 43 | Beef Cheese and Lettuce Sandwich | Not 75% green |
| 44 | chicken roll with cheese, crackers and fruit | Not 75% green |
| 45 | Wrap | Not 75% green |

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| Ref # | Meal name | Reason for non-compliance |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|
| 46 | Ham bun | Not 75% green |
| 47 | Ham and Salad Sandwich | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 48 | Cauliflower and Chipotle Taco | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 49 | Cauliflower and Chipotle Taco | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 50 | Cauliflower and Chipotle Taco | Portion size |
| 51 | Vegetarian - Macaroni Cheese with Vegetables | Not 75% green |
| 52 | Chicken and Lettuce Sandwich | Not 75% green |
| 53 | Wrap with muffin and orange | Not 75% green |
| 54 | Vegetarian Pizza | Portion size |
| 55 | Ham Cheese and Salad Roll | Portion size |
| 56 | Chicken Roll | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 57 | Chicken Roll | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 58 | Chicken & Salad Wrap | Portion size |
| 59 | Chicken and Salad Wrap | Portion size |
| 60 | Chicken and Salad Wrap | Portion size |
| 61 | Chicken and Salad Roll | Not 75% green |
| 62 | Butter Chicken | Not 75% green |
| 63 | Crispy Chicken Salad | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 64 | Crispy Chicken Salad | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 65 | Chicken Drumsticks and Salad | Not 75% green |
| 66 | Butter Chicken | Not 75% green |
| 67 | Macaroni Cheese | Not 75% green |
| 68 | Nachos | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 69 | Friday Hangi | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 70 | Hummus and Salad Wrap | Portion size |
| 71 | Beef, Cheese and Lettuce sandwich | Not 75% green |
| 72 | Beef, Cheese and Lettuce sandwich | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 73 | Beef, Cheese and Lettuce sandwich | Not 75% green |
| 74 | Beef, Cheese and Lettuce sandwich | Not 75% green |
| 75 | Corn Fritter | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 76 | Roast Dinner | Portion size |
| 77 | Chicken Nachos | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 78 | Chicken Salad Wrap | Not 75% green, portion size |
| 79 | Zucchini Fritter Roast Chicken and Vegetables | Not 75% green |
| 80 | Bacon and Salad Open Taco | Not 75% green, portion size |